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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

18 January 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 123

SUBJECT: Estimate of Current Soviet "Peace" Moves.

The current so-called Soviet "peace offensive" is not believed to reflect any sincere Kremlin desire to negotiate outstanding difficulties on other than Soviet terms, and it is doubtful that the USSR anticipates any serious consideration of its tenuous advances either by the US or by other western governments. However, in attempting to weaken the Western position and to forestall, or at least delay, any positive western action, the USSR may continue its current propaganda theme in pursuit of the following objectives:

1. To create the illusion through exploitation of the world's hope for peace, that the West (particularly the US) is responsible for present tension, and that an equitable solution would be possible except for Western intransigence.
2. Through a temporary and, in some respects, only apparent alleviation of tension, to foster doubt in the US Congress as to the necessity for defense and foreign-aid expenditures.
3. To create popular doubt and hesitation, both in the United States and Western Europe with regard to participation in Western defense plans.
4. To permit the Communist parties of Western Europe to regroup their forces and regain some of the prestige and popular support lost as a result of recent "direct action."
5. To encourage and increase the disruptive influence of those elements in the West which continue to press for East-West negotiations on terms adverse to Western interests.

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NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

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This tactical shift in propaganda emphasis apparently was timed to take advantage of several factors, including the following: (a) the convening of the 81st Congress; (b) the replacement of Secretary Marshall; (c) German dissatisfaction and Western European misgivings with the Ruhr decisions; and (d) current discussions concerning the North Atlantic Pact.

From the Soviet viewpoint, such a propaganda shift does not commit the USSR to any specific course of action, and, unless it is vigorously combatted, it will provide the Kremlin and its Communist allies with a convenient breathing space in which to plan and organize renewed attacks on western recovery and defense efforts.